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Atari Online News, Etc.
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~ Glass for Non-profits! ~ IBM Rethinking Design! ~ Web Outrage Popular?

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->From the Editor's Keyboard           "Saying it like it is!"
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We came through Hurricane Arthur fairly unscathed last week, thankfully. Yes, we got some thunderstorms and rain, but nothing like was felt in the mid-Atlantic. And, later in the week, a neighboring town was hit with a microburst - a storm similar to a tornado. There was a lot of destruction that, thankfully, didn't occur here, a few miles away! You just never know what Mother Nature is going to bring!

Until next time...

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Sega Lures Original Cast Members for Alien:  
Isolation !  
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                        Philia: The Sequel to Elansar - Jaguar CD!  
                        And much more!
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Sega Lures Back Original Movie Cast Members for Alien: Isolation

Ripley s headed back to the Nostromo and she s bringing some friends with her.

Sigourney Weaver and several other cast members from the 1979 horror/sci-fi classic Alien have signed on to be part of Sega's upcoming Alien: Isolation, but you'll need to preorder the game to see and hear them.

Weaver (who played hero Ellen Ripley in the film and its sequels) along with Tom Skerritt (Dallas), Veronica Cartwright (Lambert), Harry Dean Stanton (Brett) and Yaphet Kotto (Parker) have all agreed to do voice work for and lend their likenesses to a pair of bonus missions in the game. Ian Holm, who played Ash, has licensed his image to the game but will not be contributing any vocal work.

Preorder the game, and you'll get a bonus level called Crew Expendable, which puts you in the shoes of Ripley, Dallas, or Parker as you try to lure the alien to the ship's airlock. And if you preorder at GameStop, you'll get another level where, as Ripley, you'll have to navigate the Nostromo to activate the self-defense sequences and then retrace your steps to an escape shuttle.

It's a notable get for Sega, as many of these actors have not been involved with previous Alien-themed games (and, really, who could blame them, given the track record of the titles?).

Working with the original cast has been an incredible experience, said Alistair Hope, creative lead on Alien: Isolation. It was important to us to have the key original cast members reprise their roles in order to perfectly capture the atmosphere of the movie.

The main story of Alien: Isolation will indeed revolve around a Ripley, but not the one Weaver made famous. The game centers on her daughter, who must scavenge resources and hide in order to stay alive. Like the original 1979 film, it's less about shooting and more about tension and survival when faced with overwhelming odds. It's also pee-your-pants scary at times.

The game, due Oct. 7, was a hit at E3 this year, with The Verge declaring it the scariest thing at the show and Polygon's Danielle Riendeau calling it one of the most terrifying slices of a game I've ever played in my life.

PlayStation 3 and PlayStation Vita Reach Sales Milestones in Japan

The Japanese gaming industry closely monitors its hardware and software sales, and releases those numbers on a weekly basis to the public. That lets us know that, according to Japanese number tracker Media Create (via Gematsu), both PlayStation 3 and PlayStation Vita reached sales milestones in the east over the past week.

According to Media Create, PlayStation 3 sold 7,480 units in Japan between June 23rd and June 29th, bringing its cumulative units sold in the territory over 10 million (10,004,826, to be exact). Vita sold 24,919 new units in Japan during the same period, bringing its cumulative units sold in the territory above three million (3,001,854, to be exact).

For context, Nintendo's 3DS has sold 15.77 million units, Nintendo's Wii has sold 12.74 million units, Nintendo's Wii U has sold 1.81 million units, Sony's PlayStation 4 has sold 613,786 units, Sony's PlayStation Portable has sold 19.69 million units, and Microsoft's Xbox 360 has sold 1.61 million units.

At over 33 million sold, Nintendo DS remains the best-selling gaming

hardware of all-time in Japan. Game Boy, at over 32 million, and PlayStation 2, at over 23 million, come in at second and third, respectively.

San Francisco Finally Overcomes Its Hysteria Over Coin-Op Videogames

There's an excellent chance that San Francisco will join the modern era, tossing off its conservative mantel on July 8. That's when the city's Board of Supervisors will meet and most likely update the antiquated laws governing coin-operated amusement devices.

The laws, which were enacted in a panic during the early 1980s, were intended to protect the city's youth from the menace of arcades and such games as Galaga and Pac-Man. Running an estimated 6,000 words, the Police Code all but eliminated coin-op games within the city by placing strict limitations on licensing and other requirements.

The new legislation, passed provisionally in April, would be made permanent.

Among other things, it loosens up the restrictions, allowing for up to 10 games on premises without requiring a license. Sponsored by City Supervisors Scott Wiener and London Breed, the lifting of the antiquated restrictions was prompted by a number of small business owners wishing to offer arcade games.

In a final piece of irony, many of the very same arcade games the regulations attempted to outlaw more than three decades ago are increasingly popular among bar and tavern patrons wishing to capture digital nostalgia.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online      -      Online Users Growl & Purr!
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Can Once-Famous Gaming Giant Atari Turn a New Generation on to Pong?

Brands come and brands go, but only rarely does one dig its own grave.

That's exactly what Atari did 31 years ago. It was 1983, and so poor were the sales of the brand's 20 or so titles (in particular, E.T., generally believed to be the worst video game of all time) that the video game company dug a hole in the New Mexico desert and buried some 700,000 cartridges in it.

That story is just one reason the gaming world has been abuzz with Atari news of late. Not only was the fabled Alamogordo dump discovered and excavated in late April (more on that later), but the great ghost of Atari itself has also been stirring. Two weeks ago, Atari Inc. which,

not unlike E.T., exists as a kind of quaint, shrunken version of its former self went public with a new corporate strategy.

Crawling out of bankruptcy late last year, the company that gave us legendary games like Pong, Asteroids and Missile Command will now attempt to refashion itself into what it calls an interactive entertainment production company.

What s that mean? Basically, Atari will relaunch some of its classic games for online and mobile platforms. Atari will also conduct what it calls a robust licensing business including hardware and apparel, and in general promises to court new (read: younger) consumers.

We can take these brands that have recognition and the history of Atari as the progenitor of the video game business and refresh them, said marketing director Tony Chien. These titles harken back to the original games, but we ll put in new technology and quality so that new audiences can be captured as well.

If Atari s lucky, they can. Amid these big plans looms a big question: Can a technology company that last made headlines when the Bee Gees were a Top 40 act stage a successful comeback? In the view of Allen Adamson, chairman of brand consultancy Landor Associates, maybe but it won t be easy.

Atari s only advantage is that we ve heard of them, Adamson said. But they ll have to prove they can make good games and serve them up in a way that feels contemporary. They ll have to quickly prove that they re not your father s Oldsmobile.

Or his Space Invaders, either.

For the sake of those under 40, a bit of background: Once upon a time, Atari was the Apple of its day. Founded in 1972, the company took the world by storm with Pong, the world s first arcade video game, and then followed it up with a killer string of games including Asteroids, Tempest, Missile Command and Breakout. (That last one dreamed up by two unknown programmers named Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs.) Beginning in 1977, Atari s 2600 Video Computer System put joysticks into millions of American living rooms, and by 1982 the company was scoring annual revenues of \$2 billion.

But a disastrous merger with Warner Communications sent Atari s best talent running for the exits, and battalion of simply awful games (including the aforementioned E.T.) sent Atari into deep space. By 1985, with the appearance of a competitor called Nintendo, it was game over.

Or almost over. With its name and trademarks passing from JTS Corp. to Hasbro to Infogrames Entertainment SA, Atari s corporate heart never quite stopped beating. And now, fresh out of Chapter 11, Atari aims to quicken the pulse of a new generation of gamers.

Mainly, it aims to do that by reaching into its trove of illustrious games and updating them. A visit to Atari s site reveals the new Asteroids equipped with the kind of dreamy deep-space background impossible in the old days, even as programmers have been careful to keep those familiar, crinkle-shaped planetoids floating past.

Meanwhile, Atari seems willing to bend the themes of its classic games to fit a far-out array of licensing partners. A just-announced deal with

family-feeder chain Denny's, for example, promises remixed mobile games including (get ready, folks) Centipede, Take-Out, and Hashtriods, which takes place aboard the "SS Denny's Condiment Transport ship."

Maybe the kids will think that's funny, but will serious gamers tolerate this stuff? Uh, no, says author and video game historian Curt Vendel. Not only is dusting off and reselling classic games a shortsighted idea, he said, the company's been pursuing this same strategy for the last 10-plus years.

He means that literally. When Hasbro Interactive bought Atari in 1998, then president Tom Dusenberry hailed the brand's groundbreaking games [that] helped pioneer the video game industry and promised to bring these classics back to life by updating them with the latest technology and interactive game design while preserving their heart and spirit.

Vendel believes that tactic is no more likely to work now than it did then.

Unfortunately, extremely poor reimaginings of original Atari assets only further insulted and pushed away the very consumer base Atari needed, he said. The new titles were mostly poorly designed and implemented adaptations which most major gaming sites panned.

Vendel is no less pleased with Atari's merchandising plans, which will see the company's futuristic analog logo on everything from T-shirts to barware in the coming months. While mature fans (nearly 40 percent of gamers are 36 or older) warm to the idea of drinking from an Atari mug, Vendel believes this revenue stream is beneath the dignity of a once-great technology firm. Atari has been diminished, he said, ... for putting its name on shot glasses and underwear. [It's] a sad example of how the brand that practically put video gaming into the collective conscious of the world has been completely shattered and destroyed.

Which brings us back to those E.T. game cartridges. As the story goes, when Steven Spielberg's film E.T. turned into a 1982 summer blockbuster, Atari's developers rushed so fast to get a video game onto the market that they created the worst title in history. Many considered the story of the unsold units' hasty burial to be urban legend until Microsoft decided to finance the dig and find out. Backhoes uncovered the desert trove on April 26 and, according to published reports, the Alamogordo City Commission plans to sell 700 cartridges to the public.

There's no word on when that'll happen, but for the time being, Atari can be sure of one thing at least: Even old and dusty, its games can still make headlines.

Atari CEO Hints at New Hardware from The Company And Pitches Some Crazy Ideas

Atari, best known for the 1980s, is not only still going, but it has a new CEO Frederic Chesnais. And he's hinting that the company are considering releasing new hardware, but it isn't what you think it might be.

No Atari are not about to jump back into the console race for the first time since about 1983, so Microsoft and Sony can sleep soundly at night,

but in an interview with Venturebeat Chesnais spoke of wanting more Atari-branded hardware:

I don't want to say it's a hardware brand first and foremost, but it is also a hardware brand. So we are carefully looking at you know we have a replica of the initial Atari 2600, but that is also something that we want to carefully announce in the course of the next few years, which is that with new licensing with the right partners we build the brand not only in the software space but also in the hardware space.

So that's some standard CEO guff but then he uses the phrase gamified watch .

Umm

I'm not talking about a new console but, like, a watch. A gamified watch. It's not what we are going to do, but think about [something like] that. Chesnais explains this imaginary concept, Like a new type of watch is something we could do. A watch, branded, where you don't have an ordinary watch.

To give you another idea of something we could do, you have a jacket. We have a plug-in so you can power your iPhone or Android. You had a solar chip on your shoulder so that you power so that you never run out of batteries .
Gosh. Well, as he says, not either of these things but something like them.

We've no idea what he's talking about either.

Philia: The Sequel to Elansar - Jaguar CD

A new game was released for the Jaguar CD!

This is my new adventure game "Philia: the Sequel to Elansar"

The game was professionally produced with a pressed CD in a DVD case with a color cover and manual !

For those who are interested, see the ordering page here:

<http://onorisoft.free.fr/retroshop/philia.htm>

For those who don't have a Jaguar CD, don't worry, the game is available on other platforms too! :)

Windows / Mac / Linux / Falcon / Android / iOS:

<http://onorisoft.free.fr/retroshop/>

Video of the game running on Jaguar CD: <https://vimeo.com/93892663>

SDCC 2014: Nintendo To Host Super Smash Bros. Tournament

Nintendo will host its first ever Super Smash Bros. tournament for the 3DS at San Diego Comic-Con. The event will take place on July 25th at the

Nintendo Gaming Lounge, starting at noon.

Competitors will begin the preliminary round in groups of four, where they will battle it out. The winner of each group will advance to the final round, consisting of a series of one-on-one battles. The tournament is a first-come, first-served basis, and will have limited slots. Interested fans can sign up the day of the event at the Marriott Marquis & Marina.

Tournament action will be live-streamed via Nintendo's Twitch channel.

Super Smash Bros. launches for 3DS on Oct. 3 and on Wii U later this holiday season.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

City Schools Say They'll Get Less Money If Federal Internet Program Is Updated

Even if the Federal Communications Commission adds \$2 billion to a program to help purchase high-speed Internet, urban school districts said they'll probably receive less money.

City school districts say a plan to expand a federal program that helps schools and libraries purchase high-speed Internet access will actually reduce the amount of money those districts receive.

Miami-Dade school officials and the Council of Great City Schools said proposed changes to the E-Rate program will force city school districts to pay more to match federal grants and reduce the overall value of those grants.

That's because the Federal Communications Commission has proposed changing how the grants are prioritized and funded in order to modernize the program. E-Rate is a grant program funded by taxes on phones and other communications. The program helps schools and libraries purchase high-speed Internet.

The goal is to put a higher priority on wireless networking. Wireless grants were only funded if any of the \$2.3 billion E-Rate money was left over after wired grants were awarded. Few wireless grants were funded the past few years.

The proposal would also add \$2 billion over the next two years.

The FCC could vote on the proposal Friday.

But districts that found a way to pay for wireless — such as Miami-Dade — said they'll get less money because they'll appear to have less need for wireless grants. The district sought and won a \$1.2 billion bond and

used that money and E-Rate grants to update schools. Work will be completed this year.

It s kind of a penalty on us for doing what they wanted us to do, said Debbie Karcher, chief of information technology for Miami-Dade schools. We went to a lot of trouble to use E-Rate and do it.

The FCC proposal also changes the way the grants are funded. Under the current rules, school districts pay between 10 percent and 80 percent of the project s total cost. Most urban districts pay a local match of just 10 percent because they have a high percentage of low-income students.

The minimum match would increase to 20 percent of the project s total cost, according to the FCC proposal.

E-Rate will contribute four dollars for every one dollar spent by the poorest schools, Mainish Naik with the Council of Great City Schools wrote in the group s newsletter, but this change actually doubles the financial cost that will be incurred by high poverty districts.

Miami-Dade s Karcher wants grants to be given out based on the number of students enrolled, and to give districts more flexibility in how they spend the money for networking. And both Karcher and the Council of Great City Schools said the FCC needs to add more money to E-Rate and not just shift funding from other sources.

We can t keep funding this much technology on the dollars allocated 12 years ago, Karcher said.

Schools in Florida and across the nation are undergoing a digital overhaul right now. New online exams tied Common Core standards fully adopted by Florida and 42 other states will test school networks. And Florida lawmakers have required half of all classroom instruction is delivered digitally whether through electronic textbooks, web content, high-tech classroom tools or other means by the time classes start in 2015.

FCC Passes Controversial \$5 Billion Wi-Fi Plan for Schools and Libraries

The Federal Communications Commission voted today to devote an extra \$5 billion over the next five years toward expanding Wi-Fi networks in schools and libraries.

"The effort will potentially provide a 75 percent increase in Wi-Fi funding for rural schools over the next five years and a 60 percent increase for urban schools, delivering Wi-Fi to an additional 10 million students in 2015 alone," the commission said in an announcement. Wi-Fi networks are needed to deliver wireless Internet access to the tablets and laptops students increasingly use in classrooms.

The \$5 billion over five years is in addition to E-rate's annual budget of \$2.4 billion.

The plan was approved 3-2, with Democrats led by Chairman Tom Wheeler voting in favor and Republicans voting against. The majority said the plan will modernize the nation's E-rate program, which provides discounted telecommunications services, Internet access, and equipment to eligible schools and libraries. It is paid for by the Universal Service Fund,

which in turn is funded by US residents through surcharges on phone bills.

The FCC's order today was accompanied by a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking which seeks comment on the "Long-term program funding needs necessary to meet goals and funding targets established in the Order," according to an FCC fact sheet.

The majority seems to believe that extra surcharges won't be necessary. In the next two years, \$2 billion will be made available "through improved financial management practices that free up excess reserves," the FCC announcement said. "For the following three years, the program will target \$1 billion annually to Wi-Fi while continuing to ensure funding is available for broadband connectivity to schools and libraries by phasing out support for non-broadband services, such as pagers and phones, and through increased efficiencies."

Republican Commissioner Ajit Pai is doubtful, saying during today's meeting that "any talk of fiscal responsibility will be short-lived. In five months, maybe six, we'll be back at this table discussing how much to increase Americans' phone bills. Universal service contribution rates have jumped 60 percent under this administration. What's a few billion dollars more?"

The FCC is also aiming to simplify the application process to make it easier for schools and libraries to apply. Even here, though, Pai said that "schools and libraries generally still have to fill out a 17-page application to receive funding." They'll also have to follow "specialized procurement rules," wait months to receive any funding comments, and decide how to spend E-rate funds "up to a year before the school year begins."

Pai argued that schools and libraries should be given more leeway to make their own decisions on how to spend the money.

In a less controversial move, the FCC today also voted to make up to \$100 million available for "experiments" that will help the agency expand rural broadband.

This includes "\$75 million to test construction of networks offering service plans providing 25 Mbps downloads and 5 Mbps uploads."

Chinese Hackers Hit US Personnel Networks

Chinese hackers broke into the computer networks of the Office of Personnel Management earlier this year with the intention of accessing the files of tens of thousands of federal employees who had applied for top-secret security clearances, according to The New York Times.

Senior U.S. officials say the hackers gained access to some of the agency's databases in March before the threat was detected and blocked, the Times reported in an article posted on its website Wednesday night. How far the hackers penetrated the agency's systems was not yet clear, the newspaper said.

Accusations of hacking by China and counterclaims of such activity by the U.S. government have strained U.S.-Chinese relations. Chinese hacking has

been a major theme of U.S.-China discussions this week in Beijing, though both sides have publicly steered clear of the controversy.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest said Thursday that both the federal personnel office and the Department of Homeland Security took steps to mitigate any risk as soon as they learned about the possible intrusion.

"We have no reason to believe that personal identifiable information was compromised," Earnest said from Austin, Texas, where President Barack Obama had events.

Secretary of State John Kerry was asked about the Times report after wrapping up meetings in Beijing Thursday. "At this point in time, it does not appear to have compromised any sensitive material," he said. "I'm not going to get into any specifics of the ongoing investigation."

Kerry said he did not discuss the specific case with the Chinese, but added, "We've been clear on larger terms that this is an issue of concern."

A Chinese government spokesman on Thursday reiterated Beijing's oft-stated position that it is "resolutely opposed" to Internet hacking and said there were parties who wanted to make China look like a cybersecurity threat.

"Some of the American media and cybersecurity firms are making constant efforts to smear China and create the so-called China cyberthreat," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said at a regular briefing. "They have never been able to present sufficient evidence. We are deeply convinced that such reports and commentaries are irresponsible and are not worth refuting."

In May, the Justice Department filed a 31-count indictment against five Chinese military officials operating under hacker aliases and accused them of penetrating computer networks of a half-dozen steel companies and makers of solar and nuclear technology to gain a competitive advantage. The Chinese government denied the allegations and suspended a working group on cyber rules that was to be part of the annual Strategic and Economic Dialogue this week.

The Office of Personnel Management houses personal information for all federal employees. Those applying for security clearances would be expected to provide such information as foreign contacts, previous jobs, past drug use and other personal details, the newspaper reported.

The Times quoted an unidentified senior U.S. official as saying that the attack had been traced to China but that it wasn't clear whether the hackers were part of the government.

The Office of Personnel Management oversees a system by which federal employees applying for security clearances enter financial data and other personal information, the Times said, and those who maintain such clearances are required to update their information through that system. Agencies and contractors use the information to investigate employees.

The attack in March was not announced, even though the Obama administration has urged U.S. companies to share information about breaches in security with the government and with consumers, the newspaper reported.

"The administration has never advocated that all intrusions be made public," Caitlin Hayden, a spokeswoman for the Obama administration, said in a statement to the Times. "We have advocated that businesses that have suffered an intrusion notify customers if the intruder had access to consumers' personal information. We have also advocated that companies and agencies voluntarily share information about intrusions."

Hayden said the administration had no reason to believe that personally identifiable information for employees had been compromised.

Phishing Scam Targets US Marshals Service Bitcoin Auction List

Individuals on the recipients list of the leaked US Marshals Service email to Silk Road auction enquirers are being targeted in a phishing attack, and at least one individual has fallen for the scam.

The Wall Street Journal confirmed that several individuals on the list received phishing emails from the same source. However, not all the individuals on the leaked email recipients list were targeted.

The unfortunate victim of the attack was Sam Lee of bitcoin arbitrage fund Bitcoins Reserve, which lost 100 BTC as a result.

The funds were sent by the firm's chief technology officer, Jim Chen, after he received what seemed like an email request to do so from Lee. In fact, the funds ended up being sent outside the company to the attacker's wallet. The transaction can be seen here, according to Lee.

Lee said that the funds he had been scammed out of were owned by Bitcoins Reserve and that he used personal funds to replace them. He informed Bitcoins Reserve investors about the situation in an email, saying:

As this attack vector was only successful due to an oversight in operations, the founders of Bitcoins Reserve will compensate the company by injecting an additional 100 Bitcoins to ensure we're still effectively performing arbitrage for our investors.

The complete procedure for the scam was complicated and extremely sophisticated, but the basic process was as follows.

Lee received an email on 21st June from a certain Linda Jackson claiming to represent BitFilm Production, a genuine company based in Germany. Jackson falsely claimed that the firm was assembling a series of interviews about the impending auction for a client.

Jackson then sent Lee a second email containing a link that directed to a file containing the questions for the interviews. This appeared to be a Google Drive document, but was actually a website controlled by the attacker.

The faked page then requested Lee's email password to gain access to the document, and consequently, when the password was entered, the attacker gained access to Lee's email accounts.

The scammers finally sent an email, purporting to be from Lee, to various employees requesting funds be sent to an external bitcoin wallet address,

and the CTO unsuspectingly complied.

Lee's version of the story, and the emails from the attacker corroborating it (which CoinDesk has been given access to), mirror the phishing method described in the WSJ article.

The Journal also reported that while BitFilm Production is a real company, it had never attempted to contact the individuals on the leaked email.

The US Marshals Service has since issued a statement, saying that individuals affected by phishing scams should contact the appropriate law enforcement authorities, noting that the FBI dealt with phishing scams in the United States.

IBM Rethinking Decades-old Computer Design with \$3 Billion Investment

IBM will pour \$3 billion into computing and chip materials research over the next five years, as it rethinks computer design and looks to a future that may not involve silicon chips.

The computer design initiative could pave the way for functional quantum and cognitive computers that mimic brain functionality.

The basic architecture of the computer has remained unchanged since the 1940s. We feel, given the kinds of problems we see today, [that] this is the time to start looking for new forms of computing, said Supratik Guha, director of physical sciences for IBM Research.

An IBM chip made using graphene, a single layer of carbon atoms with tremendous capabilities for conducting heat and electricity.

Silicon design has stalled and the ability to shrink chips is reaching its limit. IBM is looking at graphene, carbon nanotubes and other materials to replace silicon in computers, and will try to develop chips that can be scaled down to the atomic level.

The announcement comes a month after Hewlett-Packard disclosed that it too is rethinking the basic design of computers.

IBM's goal is to provide the building blocks for systems that can intelligently process vast amounts of data while consuming less power, said Tom Rosamilia, senior vice president for Systems and Technology Group at IBM.

Such computers could benefit areas such as cancer research, weather modeling and providing more intelligent services over the cloud.

Accelerators like graphics processors are improving computer performance in the short term, but shrinking silicon-based processors to boost performance and reduce power is becoming more complex, Rosamilia said.

We have in other points of history had to make leaps from one technology to another, Rosamilia said. If we don't start inventing them now, we believe nobody will get there.

IBM is already making quantum computers and brain-like computers, which have been theorized for decades, but proven difficult to create. Those

computers are based on different architectures than those used today, which leads to questions about whether one new type of architecture ought to be preferred over another, Rosamilia said.

IBM could mix and match individual technologies to provide the building blocks for new computer systems, Rosamilia said.

Some combination will be coming true, and we will be riding those technologies for many years, Rosamilia said. You have to plan many years in advance for it. We're very serious about this.

The first fruits of the research will likely manifest in high-performance computers, but may eventually come to laptops and desktops, although Rosamilia couldn't provide a time frame for that.

The investment comes as Moore's Law runs its course. Intel co-founder Gordon Moore posited that the number of transistors on an integrated circuit would double every two years and while that has held steady, it is expected to be outdated within the next decade. Engineers are rethinking chip design to increase performance, especially as chips go into smaller geometries. Intel is preparing to ship PC chips made using the 14-nanometer process and has plans to move to the 10-nanometer process in the coming years.

Chip making was revolutionized when scientists purified silicon in 1950, but it will be harder to etch more features on chips when the 7-nanometer process and beyond, as the industry moves toward the atomic level, Guha said.

What will replace it at this point is unclear, Guha said.

Carbon nanotubes, which are cylinders made of carbon atoms, show the most promise as a silicon replacement. IBM researchers are shrinking the size of carbon nanotubes, but challenges remain in cooling them down and there is considerable debate around safety concerns. However, there is consensus that technical problems could be solved, Guha said.

Brain and quantum computers also involve research on computer behavior.

IBM is developing computers that mimic brain-like functionality as part of its Synapse program. The computer makes an approximation of how the brain processes information in parallel via trillions of connections, which are the synapses. IBM in 2011 demonstrated a neural chip with programmable and learning synapses that have navigation and pattern recognition abilities. IBM's goal is to build a neural chip that mimics the human brain, with 10 billion neurons and 100 trillion synapses but that uses just 1 kilowatt of power.

At the heart of quantum computers are quantum bits (qubits), which hold values of 1 and 0, which are unlike bits in conventional computers that are at a state of 1 or 0 at any given time. By storing and sharing data in more states, the qubits could speed up calculations.

Many issues still have to be resolved, including quantum noise, in which qubits are sent into undesirable states, making it difficult to execute programs normally. The only known quantum computer is sold by D-Wave Systems, but IBM's researchers earlier this year questioned the computer's relation to quantum mechanics, which looks at interaction and behavior of matter on atomic and subatomic levels.

Microsoft CEO Hints at Big Changes at The Tech Giant

In a letter to employees, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella hinted at big changes to come for the technology giant while reaffirming the company's core strengths.

In a 3,000-word letter to employees, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella says the company must "be bolder and more ambitious" as it tries to stay competitive in the always-shifting tech industry.

"Our industry does not respect tradition," Nadella wrote, "it only respects innovation."

In the letter, Nadella hinted at a big shift for the company, although it is unclear if that means cutting any of the company's 99,000 employees.

Instead, Nadella emphasized a shift in focus at the Redmond, Washington-based company.

"In order to accelerate our innovation, we must rediscover our soul our unique core."

Nadella became Microsoft's third-ever CEO when he took over the company's top job in February, following co-founder Bill Gates and Steve Ballmer.

After dominating the industry through the 90s and early 2000s, Microsoft has fallen behind the competition in some areas.

In the past few years, rapid adoption of mobile and cloud-based technology that put Microsoft, an industry leader in desktop operating systems and software, on its heels.

But the company has adapted, becoming what it calls a devices and services company.

It has launched cloud-based versions of its Office suite of programs in addition to the traditional desktop versions. It also offers a cloud-based platform for companies called Microsoft Azure.

It also has pushed its Windows tablets and smartphones, although sales of those still lag behind competitors like Samsung and Apple.

In the letter, Nadella also made specific mention of the Xbox team, which some analysts and investors have urged the company to sell, particularly after the rough launch of the new Xbox One console.

But Nadella heaped on the praise, writing that Xbox is one of the most-revered consumer brands, with a growing online community and service, and a raving fan base.

Since its launch, sales of the Xbox One have been surpassed by Sony's rival PlayStation 4. In response, Microsoft cut the price of its console from \$499 to \$399 to match the PlayStation, and removed the previously-included Kinect motion camera.

Nadella will reveal the financial implications of Microsoft's new plans when it releases its quarterly results later this month.

Google Glass To Help Nonprofits

Five nonprofit groups have been told Google will help them fulfil visions of using the technology titan's Internet-linked Glass eyewear to do good.

"Giving through Glass" program winners were selected from 1300 proposals from US charities with ideas of how to use the eyewear to achieve their goals.

Google will give each group a \$US25,000 (\$A27,000) grant, along with a pair of yet-to-be publicly released Glass eyewear and guidance from the technology firm's engineers.

"Developers are already working with these inspiring groups and next week these five non-profits will descend on Google Glass Base Camp in San Francisco for training," Google.org director Jacqueline Fuller said in a blog post on Wednesday.

Winning proposals included using Glass to let students see through the eyes of Paralympic athletes, to foster empathy for people with disabilities; encourage girls to learn maths and science, and improve communication by people with autism, hearing loss, or speech problems.

Glass will also be used on a "3000 Miles to a Cure Race Across America" to raise money and awareness for brain cancer research.

Google last month made Glass available in Britain to early adopters willing to spend STG1000 (\$A1800) for a chance to dabble with the Internet-linked eyewear.

The California-based technology titan expanded an "explorer" program beyond the United States for the first time by inviting British enthusiasts to virtually queue for the gadget online at google.co.uk/glass.

The eyewear, hotly anticipated by some, but feared by others, became available in the United States in May to anyone with \$US1500 to spare and a desire to become an "explorer."

Google has been working to burnish the image of Glass, which has triggered concerns about privacy since the devices are capable of capturing pictures and video.

During the Explorer testing phase, developers are creating apps for Google Glass, which can range from getting weather reports to sharing videos to playing games.

Windows 7 To Hit Extended Support Status in Six Months

Microsoft has posted a list of service reaching the end of their support cycle, confirming that Windows 7 will reach extended support from January 2015.

Windows 7 in all its versions - Windows Embedded Handheld 6.5, Windows Server 2008, Windows Storage Server 2008, Windows Exchange Server 2010, Dynamics CS 2010 and Dynamics NAV 2009 - will move to extended support on 13 January 2015.

This is not "End of Life" in the way that Microsoft cut off Windows XP support in April, but rather a transition to being not actively developed, instead being restricted to receiving only patches rather than enhancements and features.

At the same time, Forefront Unified Access Gateway 2010 Service Pack 3 and Visual Studio 2012 will require updating to the latest service packs to continue receiving updates.

A number of products will also reach End of Life on the same day, with Host Integration Server 2004, Systems Management Server 2003, Virtual Server 2005 and Visual Foxpro 9.0 will all set go the way of Windows XP.

Even before that, several products will be getting the same treatment on 14 October, including Windows CE 5.0 which reaches end of life along with Internet Security and Acceleration Server 2004. Office 2010 and Sharepoint Server 2010 will require updating from Service Pack 1.

Finally, Windows Phone 7.8, the intermediate package designed to address the problems faced by Windows Phone 7.5 owners as they waited for Windows Phone 8, will move to extended support on 9 September.

Microsoft has advised users to upgrade or update their software as soon as possible, or contact their system administrator for further information.

Few of these announcements will have an impact on most end users, however following the adverse reaction to the announcement of the End of Life for Windows XP, coupled with the nearly universal panning of Windows 8.x, Microsoft will need to manage these announcements carefully to avoid Orson Welles' War of the Worlds style panic from the Windows faithful as they scramble to upgrade to the upcoming Windows 9.

Windows 7 has a growing PC market share that presently stands at over 50 percent.

Microsoft Enhances Azure, Office 365

Microsoft announced a raft of enhancements Wednesday to its cloud portfolio, including new storage and machine learning capabilities for Azure and a revamped set of Office 365 Business subscription plans. Intended to demonstrate the company's shift toward CEO Satya Nadella's "mobile-first, cloud-first" strategy, the announcements set the stage for Microsoft's Worldwide Partner Conference (WPC), which starts Monday in Washington, DC.

The new products include Microsoft Azure StorSimple, a hybrid cloud storage offering that Microsoft claims will help companies to manage exploding data needs cost-effectively. Built around the premise that frequently accessed files can be stored locally while cold storage can be left in the cloud, Azure StorSimple includes two new arrays - the Azure StorSimple 8100 and 8600 - that will become available Aug. 1. They'll be

joined by two related Azure services: Azure StorSimple Manager and Azure StorSimple Virtual Appliance. In a blog post, Microsoft touted the announcement as an opportunity for its system integration partners to explore new storage packaging.

Microsoft also announced that the Azure Machine Learning service preview, announced in June, will expand to partners and customers July 14. In private preview for more than a year, the service aims to make it quicker and easier for Microsoft's partners to create sophisticated analytic cloud services for customers.

Other news included the expansion of the preview of Microsoft's Azure government cloud, as well as a new Microsoft Dynamics CRM Online offering for government cloud customers. Like Microsoft's other government cloud services, Dynamics CRM Online for government data will be housed separately from public Azure services in its own multi-tenant cloud.

As for Office news, Microsoft tweaked its plans for Office 365 Business SMB customers. For \$8.25 per user per month or \$99 per user per year, Office 365 Business includes the full suite of installable Office applications on up to five PCs or Macs and five Windows tablets or iPads, as well as 1 TB of OneDrive for Business cloud storage for each user. For \$5 monthly or \$60 annually per user, Office 365 Business Essentials offers basic business cloud services, including email, calendaring, Office Online (but not the downloadable versions), online meetings, video conferencing, and 1 TB of OneDrive storage.

Office 365 Business Premium is the most complete package. For \$12.50 per month or \$150 per year, each user gets everything in the Office 365 Business Package, as well as online services: Exchange Online, Lync Online, SharePoint Online, and Yammer.

The new Office 365 Business plans will replace the current SMB lineup, but Enterprise plans remain the same. The new plans will become available Aug. 1. Most current customers can opt in.

Microsoft also announced that Codename Oslo, an upcoming Office 365 product previewed this year, will be officially branded "Delve." The company says Delve will use machine learning to become familiar with a user's needs and routines, which it will use to deliver real-time insights. Delve might recognize that the user constantly interfaces with a certain colleague, for example, and automatically surface relevant information about the contact, including why he or she is important, in a dashboard.

CEO Satya Nadella has earned mostly praise since taking over for Steve Ballmer this year. However, WPC attendees will still have questions for the new CEO, ranging from how the evolving Azure portfolio competes with those of Amazon and other cloud competitors, and how well Microsoft handled recent cloud service outages, to whether the company will, as rumored, demonstrate Windows 9.

Has Apple Got A Hit on Its Hands?
OS X Yosemite 4X More Popular than Mavericks

Four times as many developers are using Apple's OS X Yosemite as its predecessor Mavericks, we're told.

That factoid comes from web advertising network Chitika, which claims Macs running Yosemite generated, in one month, four times more ad impressions than those running OS X Mavericks during the same period last year.

Yosemite was unveiled on June 2 at Apple's WWDC as a beta for programmers, and focused on beefing up the engines of the desktop operating system.

The advertising biz counted up the number of ads served within the US and Canada between June 2 and July 2, and found that on average Yosemite Macs generated .20 per cent of OS X traffic, compared to the .05 per cent of OS X traffic logged to Mavericks following its unveiling in 2013.

"Overall, the data point to a promising future for OS X Yosemite. In the short term, we expect the operating system's usage share to grow in the wake of the release of the third Developer Preview edition on July 7, 2014," Chitika concluded.

"Additionally, with the increased level of developer activity thus far, along with the success of the similarly no cost OS X Mavericks, it's very probable that OS X Yosemite adoption will outpace that of any other previous Mac desktop OS when it is released publicly later this year."

The ad network, which pumps out "hundreds of millions" of impressions in North America, notes that Yosemite accounts for an extremely small portion of OS X traffic on its networks understandable given that the new OS X is only available to developers as a beta release and will not hit general release until this Fall.

Mavericks machines maintain 45.7 per cent of all Mac traffic on Chitika, while OS X Snow Leopard has 17.5 per cent and Mountain Lion 17.1 per cent.

The company believes that Yosemite has so many new desktop features and user interface tweaks that developers are encouraged to spend more time using the thing, hence why they can be found hanging around the internet a bit more.

The operating system will sport new options for iOS integration as well as new versions of Safari, Mail and Spotlight.

"The increased level of aggregate activity for Yosemite is likely partially driven by the prominent changes present in this OS version fueling a higher degree of developer curiosity and experimentation," the ad slinger noted.

"The changes to Safari in particular may be prompting a greater amount of web usage from current users in terms of testing and customization."

The Secret to Being Happier: Quitting Facebook For 99 Days?

A campaign called "99 Days of Freedom" is daring Facebook users to take a summer detox from the addictive social network.

However, not everyone has what it takes to go three months without logging on to check their newsfeed for friends' selfies, relationship updates and

vacation snaps.

The campaign, which launched earlier this week, has so far encouraged just 2,600 of Facebook's 1 billion active users to take a vow of abstinence.

The initiative comes as a response to Facebook's "mood experiment" on 700,000 users, said Merijn Straathof, the art director at Just, the Netherlands-based creative agency behind the "99 Days of Freedom" idea.

"Facebook is an incredible platform, we're all fiercely loyal users and we believe that there's a lot to love about the service," he said. "But we we also feel that there are obvious emotional benefits to moderation."

"Our prediction is that the experiment will yield a lot of positive personal experiences and, 99 days from now, we'll know whether that theory has legs," he added.

If the average user spends 17 minutes per day on Facebook and completes the challenge, they will have an extra "28 hours of freedom" to pursue other activities, Straathof said.

While it's still early in the challenge, Straathof said participants have reported a "rough" day one, while others have said they're much happier spending the extra time reading or going outside.

"Day 1 is the roughest. I am always looking for my app when I deleted it. I feel empowered to keep doing this though. I know I can stay strong!" a user named Henderson Cunningham wrote.

A man named Kurt wrote he was using his Facebook hiatus as motivation to work out more.

"I'm heading back to the gym and getting more exercise with my "re-captured" time," he wrote.

Are you daring enough to take the challenge? Or does it sound more like a punishment? Let us know what you think in the comments.

Why Is Internet Outrage So Popular?

On the off chance you're having trouble coming up with something to be outraged about, how about outrage itself?

That's more or less what the always-entertaining writer Teddy Wayne did the other day in The New York Times, casting a critical eye on online outrage—the, loud, all-caps, hypercritical discourse that has come to be a routine feature of the World Wide Web. Bile is not new to Internet life, he conceded. But the last few years have seen it crawl from under the shadowy bridges patrolled by anonymous trolls, he argued, and emerge into the sunshine of social media, where people proudly trumpet their ethical outrage.

Indeed, Wayne cites a study that made the rounds last year—presumably because it was so outrageous?—arguing that Anger is More Influential Than Joy.

He has a point: Social media really does seem to have upped the outrage quotient in public discourse. Angry denunciation, evidently, is highly shareable, as digital gurus like to say.

Why is that? Surely there are many reasons, but the most interesting one is also, curiously, the most upbeat: Haterade helps us make friends.

That, at least, is the suggestion of an earlier study with the fabulous title *Interpersonal chemistry through negativity: Bonding by sharing negative attitudes about others*.

That research, described here by Aaron Retica, writing for *The New York Times Magazine*, suggested that one of the surest routes to friendship is disliking the same things about other people.

Notably, the study included asking subjects whether they thought they would enjoy meeting someone whose likes and dislikes they'd learned about. Turned out shared negativity was a stronger indicator of getting along than mutual enthusiasm.

And if you think about the vitriol in your own social media feeds, doesn't this ring true? Nobody spewing venom about political figures, celebrities, tech companies, or current events is changing anyone else's mind. Thus, we unfriend or ignore those whose outrage we disagree with.

But when others' outrage echoes our own, it's different. Maybe they (we) are properly signalling to the like-minded about our common ground—that is, where we can all come together and hate the same things.

Lately, for instance, I've noticed a lot of Facebook and Twitter contacts endorsing a boycott of Hobby Lobby, in connection with the Supreme Court's decision that such private firms can opt out of covering birth control under the Affordable Care Act if religious objections come into play. More specifically, I've noticed this boycott idea being pushed by people who I am quite sure have never visited a Hobby Lobby in their lives.

(I suppose this falls into the category that writer Tom Vanderbilt suggested on Twitter recently ought to be called the *fauxcott*. Useless as a practical tactic, it functions purely as a way to announce outrage and perhaps find community in discontent.)

And, really, it's not particularly outrageous to concede that what we're against says as much as what we are for: Fandom involves anti-fandom, as a scholar on both subjects once put it. Think of the Star Wars fan who hates *Trek*, since his galaxy isn't big enough for both franchises. Presumably similar logic applies to the MSNBC zealot who can't stop attacking FOX News, and vice versa.

Again, the opposite of a fan club is not wholly new. But such scenarios do seem more prevalent, for reasons both technical and cultural. Even more recently, and even more bluntly, a post on the online magazine *The Toast* invited writers to share *The Books You Hate The Most*. Specifically: The books we hate so much it makes us glad to exist, that we can play host to so pure and so fervent a hatred it feels like a blessing. There are about 1,400 responses so far.

Outrage may also be underrated as a creative spark: The critic A.O. Scott once argued that Margaret Thatcher enraged so many people

who channeled their anger and talent into art that she functioned as a kind of anti-muse. Even here, I d argue that shared outrage was crucial: Surely a community of creative vitriol-makers and their like-minded fans depends largely on a common enemy.

None of this, of course, is an endorsement of outrage, which does cheapen and darken social-media discourse, and in most cases has no particular effect apart from ruining everyone s day. But still. It s worth recognizing that outrage isn t just a social dissolvent it s also a social glue.

So if you find the trend hateful well, maybe you should go online and declare your disgust? You might even make some friends who are outraged by outrage, too.

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